

REPORTS OF CASES OF INSANITY FROM
THE INSANE DEPARTMENT OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HOSPITAL.

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CASE VI.—*Paranoia.*

Reported by Dr. J. Chalmers Da Costa, Assistant Physician.

J. J.—, single, middle-aged, was admitted to the hospital August 5th, 1885. He was born in Ireland, and was a Protestant, with a good common-school education. He drinks, but never smokes nor chews.

His father is alive and well, and there was never any insanity in the family. His mother was subject to violent attacks of neur-
algia. He has a sister and brothers alive and well.

When about 20 years of age, he states that he had lung trouble, which was shown by night sweats, spitting of blood, loss of flesh, and cough. These symptoms came on gradually, and lasted for several years; then he apparently recovered, and he has had no relapse. He had an attack of acute rheumatism in 1875.

On admission to the hospital, his friends stated that for a long time he had been drinking heavily, and that this attack, which was his first, began with mania a potu about a month before. He was evidently laboring under great fear; he refused food and was fed with a tube. He attacked all who approached him, cried and wrung his hands, and appeared to be in a frenzy of grief and terror. All his organs seemed to be normal, and no evidences of syphilis were found. Under hydrobromate of hyoscine he slept, and his bowels, which were constipated, were moved by calomel and magnesia sulphate.

August 6th.—His condition was unchanged; he was restless and agitated, and subject to hallucinations of a terrible kind; he attacked people and hurled maledictions at imaginary individuals. He was sleepless and refused food. His case was diagnosticated as acute melancholia.

August 20th.—He was somewhat better. He ate a little, but with evident suspicion, and said somebody wanted to kill him.

August 25th.—He was quieter and more rational, and ate better.

September 15th.—He was somewhat worse ; was singing and cursing.

September 20th.—He was decidedly better.

September 24th.—He left the hospital in the care of his friends.

He returned, of his own accord, in January, 1886, he said because of a bad memory. He complained that he would constantly forget recent events, although he remembered everything that occurred previous to his insanity. He was not nervous nor excited, and in other respects, besides this partial amnesia, seemed well. His memory gradually returned, until he even remembered many facts of his insanity.

Examination showed that his forehead was high, and his hair black streaked with gray. He had no marked defect of sight or hearing, and his expression was intelligent and good-natured. He had no signs of venereal disease, and his heart and lungs showed no lesion. His urine was normal. His motility was unimpaired, and his reflexes normal. He complained of feelings as of running water, fornication, etc., in different parts of his body. He had occasional hallucinations of touch and hearing, and fixed delusions of the systematized variety. These delusions related to the powers of spirits, and the fact that all disease was caused by evil, and all prosperity given by good spirits. He said they guided his hand and gave him knowledge by writing. He was not emotional, and his intellect, though much influenced by his delusion, was not in other respects injured. He argued fairly well upon his belief.

His own story was briefly as follows : " Some time before I came here, I began to get violent headaches, and to be wakeful at night, but this was not on account of pain. I felt depressed, but could not tell why. One night, when in bed, I heard a voice screaming, but I could not tell what it said. I heard it all night, and searched the room to find its cause. Then I began to hear it regularly at night, and soon after regularly in the daytime ; it got so bad that it kept me from working. After a time, this screaming was transformed into many voices, which said, ' they will kill you,' and I would ask who, but they would only repeat, ' they will kill you.' I struggled against these voices and did not at first believe them, but after a time I commenced to, and was much frightened. One day, I got wild and wandered over the city with the voices pursuing me. I tried to go home, but could not ; I could not go in, something held me back. I reached the house of a friend, who told me to go to bed there, and I did so. The voices were so bad that I put the bed against the door for safety. I heard hundreds of voices saying, ' John, they will kill you.' I got up and dressed and ran from the house and went to a police-station for safety. In the cell, the voices got worse and worse ; I became wild and then do not remember anything until I came here, or rather until I found myself here. The voices were still around, and they told me not to eat, for the food was poisoned ; and I did not, for I believed them. After a time, I determined to eat, and a bowl of

milk was offered me, and the voices said, 'John, it is nitro-glycerin;' but, as I could not live so, I drained it, and for hours was afraid of exploding. When I found I did not explode I knew the voices lied to me, and determined not to believe them any more. I had on several occasions seen ghosts, usually naked men with knives. Then the voices got weaker, and I saw no more ghosts. I wondered what the voices were, and it suddenly flashed on me that they were evil spirits. I think something told me this, and that I was pursued with devils and that I must drive them out. I determined to get rid of them by force of will, and have done so largely, although some are left, which I hear principally in the ticking of clocks and the creaking of my boots in walking. I determined not only to get rid of bad spirits, but to use good ones. I am doing so and now know that I shall live forever when I get them all out. I have cured myself of rheumatic pains, and have cleared my eyesight, being now able to read without glasses. I am writing the history of the world before the deluge, the good spirits guiding my pen, and the evil ones trying to hold it back. Some of these evil spirits I have captured by pressing down my pencil and quickly folding up the paper. I have thus caught a bottleful, and have in a bottle the veritable Satan. These spirits emit a foul air and cause disease by getting in different organs. When I finish my book, I will regenerate the world and cure all the sick, and then men will never be sick nor die."

The man who tells this interesting story is apparently sane now, except upon the subjects which centre round his delusion. His memory is good, and he is never violent nor depressed. He is good-natured, but very egotistical, because of his new acquirement, and pities me because I do not free myself from the spirits and live forever. His delusion is well systematized, and he has some reason for every possible objection to his theory, and argues tolerably well upon his absurd premises. Day by day he becomes more firm in his belief and more persistent in its defense. His intelligence is of a high order. He has travelled much in India and other countries. He may be considered an insane man of much ability. He stays in the hospital, of his own wish, to finish his book.

CASE VII.—*Acute Alcoholic Insanity.*

G. J.— was admitted to the hospital October 11th, 1886. He is white, married, 40 years of age, had a common-school education, and has been a sailor.

He has no children; he has two sisters alive and well, and four sisters dead, though from what cause he is ignorant. There has been no insanity in the family; and no consanguinity in the marriage of his father and mother.

When on shore, he drank largely and used tobacco, smoking and chewing. He was never sick, except with malaria. He never had a fit nor a sun-stroke, and never remembered having any head injury. He had no syphilis. The sight of his right eye was destroyed, some years ago, by the discharge of a shot, and he had a

cut on the cheek, which he got, two years ago, in a fight. On the roth of September, about one month before his admission, he was stabbed in the abdomen, and badly injured, while drunk. He was taken to the hospital and lost much blood. He was not maniacal nor depressed before the injury. While going to the hospital in the ambulance, he began to see strange animals and demons. In the hospital, he was found to have a bad abdominal injury, which was dressed. He then passed into a state of wandering delirium, with marked delusions of persecution.

Examination showed he had slight bronchitis of the larger tubes. His pulse was very weak and rapid; his tongue was red and tremulous, and his appetite and digestion poor. His bowels were constipated, and his spleen markedly enlarged. He had a scar on his abdomen running from the umbilicus to the pubis, and one to the right of the linea alba in the middle. He had also a scar on his right leg, and one on his left cheek. He complained of great abdominal pain. He had unsystemized delusions of persecution, which were much more marked at night. He thought that the man who stabbed him was coming to kill him, and screamed with fear. He heard voices threatening him, and saw strange animals. He had no tremor of the extremities, and the symptoms remitted markedly.

He was given hyoscine for some nights, and this made him sleep. His bowels moved, and the pain in the abdomen soon disappeared (inunctions of unguentum hydrargyri were used). His temperature was normal. His pupils were dilated, and the eyes injected. He was given at night infusion of valerian, after the first few days. During the day, he was given peptonized milk and eggs, and, after a cool bath, was rubbed down with coarse towels. He was also given quinine in five-grain doses. After a week, the patient showed marked improvement; his delusions disappeared altogether during the day and became much milder at night, and in a few days more they also disappeared, and he slept without bromide.

He was paroled November 28th, 1886.

This man's case differed from ordinary acute mania in its ready response to treatment, and short duration, in its sudden access, and in absence of the rapid flow of ideas, simulating incoherence, which is frequently found, as also in not having any state of emotional exaltation. The case, however, was not considered to be one of delirium tremens; tremor, which is such a striking feature of this disease, being absent, except in the tongue. It was considered to be an acute alcoholic insanity, due to exhaustion from loss of blood, and shock, the patient's whole condition being an exhibition of weakness—weak pulse, dilated pupils, etc.